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• **REDDISH** •

Urban District Council.




Medical Officer's Report

FOR THE YEAR 1897.



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To the Chairman and Members of the Reddish Urban District Council.

GENTLEMEN,

IN accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Board, I have pleasure in presenting to you my Annual Report on the Public Health of the Reddish District for the year 1897.

Estimated Population.—The estimated population in June, 1897, was 7834. The average number of persons per house in Reddish at the Census of 1891 was 4·66.

The number of inhabited houses, as deducted from the rate books in May, 1897, was—

	Inhabited Houses.		Estimated Population.
	—		—
South Reddish.....	640	...	2980
Mid ".....	722	...	3364
North ".....	320	...	1490
	—		—
	1682	...	7834

All calculations in this report are based on an estimated population of 7800.

Deaths and Births.—The number of deaths registered during the year was 167—84 males and 83 females. Of births there were registered 137 males and 113 females—250.

Inquest.—One inquest only was held during the year, on a case of accidental drowning in North Reddish.

Uncertified Deaths.—Two deaths were uncertified by medical practitioner—one from cancer and 1 from measles.

TABLE I. gives the number of deaths at the various age periods in the three districts :—

DISTRICT.	Total Deaths.	Under 1 year.	1 year & under 5	5 yrs. & under 15	15 & under 25.	25 & under 65.	65 and over.
SOUTH.....	62	16	15	2	1	16	12
MID	81	25	22	5	2	18	9
NORTH	24	8	—	2	2	6	6

TABLE II. shews the number and causes of deaths :—

CAUSES OF DEATHS.	South Reddish.		Mid Reddish.		North Reddish.	
	Under 5 years.	Five yrs. and over.	Under 5 years.	Five yrs. and over.	Under 5 years.	Five yrs. and over.
Scarlet Fever	1	...	4	...	...	...
Diphtheria .....	...	1	1	...	...	...
Typhoid Fever .....	...	...	...	...	...	1
Puerperal Fever.....	...	1	...	1	...	...
Measles	9	...	9	1	1	...
Whooping Cough....	3	1	1	...	...	...
Diarrhœa, &c.....	7	...	10	1	...	...
Phthisis	2	...	...	4	...	...
Bronchitis, &c.	4	6	6	9	...	4
Heart Disease.....	...	4	...	4	...	2
Inanition, Premature Birth, &c.	4	...	2	...	3	...
Injuries .....	...	...	...	...	...	1
All other Diseases...	3	16	14	14	4	8

TABLE III. gives the respective rates for the last three years:—

Year.	Birth Rate.	Death Rate.	Zymotic.	Phthisis.	Respiratory.	Infantile.
1895	32·91	16·52	2·63	1·11	3·47	168·77
1896	30·13	15·13	2·76	1·58	2·10	131·00
1897	32·05	21·41	6·79	·77	3·71	196·00

Zymotic Rate.—This rate is estimated on the number of Deaths resulting from the Zymotic Diseases, Smallpox, Measles, Scarlatina, Diphtheria, Whooping Cough, Fever (Typhus, Typhoid and other forms of Continued Fever), and Diarrhœa.

Infantile Death Rate.—This rate is taken as representing the proportion of Infants dying out of each thousand born during the year. The Infantile Mortality is largely influenced in the present instance by the Zymotic death rate, and both are much above the average. This is due chiefly to the unusual prevalence of Measles, Whooping Cough, and Epidemic Diarrhœa.

SCARLET FEVER.

This disease was epidemic for several months in 1896, and still continued in 1897, chiefly in Mid Reddish, until August, since which time only occasional cases have been reported. The following is a summary of the cases:—

	Under five years of age.		Five years and over.
South Reddish.....	2 (one fatal)	...	1
Mid „	23 (four fatal)	...	18
North „	6	...	6

There were five deaths, all in children under five years of age.

DIPHTHERIA.

Six cases of Diphtheria were notified—two in South Reddish (one of which was fatal), two in Mid Reddish (one of which was fatal), and two in North Reddish.

TYPHOID FEVER.

Nineteen cases of this disease were notified—one of which terminated fatally in North Reddish. In consequence of the extremely insanitary condition of a house in Hill Street (South Reddish), in which two cases of this disease were notified, I had the second case removed to the Isolation Hospital at Stockport.

My experience of the above diseases during 1897 confirms the opinion I have previously expressed as to the impossibility of dealing satisfactorily with epidemics in the absence of suitable means for isolating cases. It is impossible to satisfactorily isolate a case in the ordinary type of cottage house prevailing in Reddish. Attempts to do so entail much discomfort and probable loss of income to the occupants, hence milder cases are liable to be concealed, and so serve to perpetuate the disease.

MEASLES.

The District has this year suffered from a severe and prolonged epidemic of Measles. A few isolated cases came under observation in June. In July, it became epidemic in Greg Street, South Reddish,—at which time the Schools were closed on account of the holidays. In October, it shewed signs of extending so rapidly in Mid Reddish, that, in a Special Report presented to the Managers of the Houldsworth Schools, I advised the closing of the Infant Department. This was closed in the first instance for three weeks from October 26th, the length of time being afterwards increased. The Senior Department was closed shortly afterwards, as well as St. Joseph's School. The class-rooms were disinfected and the

Schools re-opened about the end of November, when the epidemic had practically ceased. During that time I received information of 154 Cases. 63 being five years of age and over, and 91 under five years of age. The total number of deaths was 20, distributed in the following age periods:—

Under Twelve months	...	...	...	5
Twelve months and under Two years	...	...	...	8
Two years and under Five years	...	...	...	6
Five years and over	...	...	...	1

WHOOPIING COUGH

Appeared about the time that Measles had attained its greatest severity and frequently attacked those recovering from the latter. It was responsible for five deaths.

DIARRHŒA.

Infantile or epidemic Diarrhœa attained a greater prevalence than usual in August and September. The deaths throughout the year were 18 in number, distributed as under:—

Under Six months	..	...	...	8
Over Six months and under One year			...	3
Over One year and under Two		...	...	5
Over Two years	...	...	...	2

Although Diarrhœa is a symptom found in the course of a variety of diseases, the Zymotic characterised as Epidemic Diarrhœa is an infectious disorder having a distinct train of symptoms, and depending in all probability on the propagation in the soil at certain elevations of temperature of a micro-organism. This organism is capable of getting into the air from the soil, and so obtains opportunity of fastening on food stuffs and the like, which serve as a living place. It is believed that in its life processes it manufactures a virulent chemical poison, which is the material cause of Diarrhœa.

The chief factors in the cause of Infectious Diarrhœa are :—
The keeping of food stuffs in improper places, where they are exposed to currents of ground air from infected soil ; the presence of “made soils” near to dwelling-places, which serve as a habitat for the micro-organisms ; and careless and uncleanly habits, which lead to the introduction of contaminated food into the system.

As will be seen from the above remarks on Measles, Whooping Cough, and Diarrhœa, the mortality from them is considerably greater than from the more important and notifiable diseases, such as Smallpox, Fever, &c.

In Reddish during 1897 forty-three deaths were registered from the above causes. This excessive mortality is not peculiar to the Reddish District, but has been found to prevail more or less all over the country.

Epidemics of Measles appear at fairly regular intervals of from two to four years at the present time. It is infective from its earliest stages, and before the rash is present, and it is therefore difficult to recognise and to control an outbreak at the very beginning.

By the people at large it is looked on as a disease of comparatively little importance, or one which children “must have ;” and is therefore treated usually by home remedies—until the onset of serious symptoms leads to a medical man being consulted, frequently too late to be of any service.

The mortality from Epidemic Diarrhœa comes with considerable regularity every year when the temperature of the soil at a depth of 4ft. rises to 56°F. From what has been said previously it will be seen that soils polluted by leaky privy pits, or made from matter containing putrefiable material, are potent factors in the dissemination of the disease. Another and important factor is the improper and careless feeding of infants by hand.

Sanitary Work.—Your Inspector, Mr. Ludlow, furnishes the following report of the sanitary work done during 1897 :—

No. of Notices served, 57.

„ Nuisances remedied, 55; and one partly, and one tenders in hand.

„ Legal Proceedings taken and result, nil.

Plans approved for 24 Houses.

„ „ „ 1 Bakehouse.

„ „ „ 1 Smithy.

„ „ „ 8 Sculleries and Washhouses.

„ „ „ 4 Additions to Works.

ABATED NUISANCES.

Nuisances from 11 Flooded Cellars.

„ „ 2 Stagnant Pools.

„ „ 12 Defective Gullies.

„ „ 2 Cases of Fowls Improperly kept.

„ „ 8 Defective Drains.

„ „ 1 Case of Fish Offal.

„ „ 2 Defective Downspouts

„ „ 1 Cesspool.

„ „ 1 Heap of Manure.

„ „ Closets and Ashpits of 116 Houses.

42 Houses Stoved.

1 Bakehouse Limewashed.

1 Dangerous Fence Removed, on complaint.

7 Garden, &c., Walls Rebuilt.

Sewage System.—The whole of the district is now supplied with a system of Main Sewers. The Sewage is treated by sedimentation—filtration through polarite filters and irrigation, and the effluent has been satisfactory.

There is no doubt that the completion of the Sewage Scheme has greatly conduced to the healthiness of the district, and will help to make Reddish a popular residential suburb for the workers of Manchester.

Scavenging.—Although it has not been found feasible to adopt the Water Carriage System in its entirety, it is recommended for new property.

The Bye-laws of the district with regard to the construction of Privies are enforced. A pamphlet has been published giving the bye-laws bearing on the construction of such places, as well as an outline sketch of the approved type of accommodation. Galvanised iron pails, provided with covers, are recommended. The system of removing the pails and contents is unsatisfactory—there is no provision of means for removing and cleansing the pails, and replacing them by washed and disinfected ones.

Bakehouses.—These premises have been regularly inspected, and are kept in good order.

Slaughter - Houses.—These premises are regularly inspected, and the Regulations have been enforced in the case of unsuitable premises which have been occasionally used for slaughtering purposes.

Dairies, Cowsheds, &c.—A systematic inspection of these premises has been carried out, and the character of the water supplied for the cattle inquired into. All cowkeepers have been called on by special notice to register, and copies of the Regulations in force have been issued and re-issued. In two cases the premises have been brought up to requirements, and a suitable supply of water obtained. All other premises not complying with the Regulations are to be rigorously dealt with.

Factories and Workshops.—The inspection of these places has been regular. A special report to the Council, dealing with sanitary defects found in some of these places, has received attention from the persons responsible.

Food, &c., Adulteration.—Several samples of lard butter, milk, &c., were taken and forwarded to the County Analyst. In all cases a certificate of purity was given.

The Regulations of the Local Government Board require that the Medical Officer of Health shall in his annual report

give some account of the lines on which action calculated to improve the health of the District may be taken in the future. The body of this Report indicates the lines on which such action may be taken. They are—

(a) The provision of means for isolating cases of dangerous infectious diseases, and, as a help thereto, the adoption of some sections of the Infectious Diseases (Prevention) Act, 1890, and the Public Health Acts Amendment Act, 1890.

(b) The adoption of methods by which the populace may be made aware of the mortality resulting from carelessness and lack of cleanliness in the care of sufferers from Measles, Whooping Cough, and Diarrhœa; and

(c) Improvement in the method of dealing with the refuse from ashpits and privies, and the adoption as far as possible of the system of water carriage in all new property.

In conclusion, may I thank you for the consideration you have shown to me in any matter I have thought it my duty to bring before you.

I am, Gentlemen,

Yours respectfully,

T. HANSON SMITH, D.P.H. (Camb.),

Medical Officer of Health, Reddish.

March, 1898.



